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New York

President: Mr. Gurirab ..... (Namibia)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 37 (*continued*)

Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development

Report of the Secretary-General (A/54/220)

Report of the Preparatory Committee for the Special Session of the General Assembly on the Implementation of the Outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and Further Initiatives (A/54/45 and Corr.1 and Add.1)

Draft decisions I, II and III (A/54/45, para. 71 and Corr.1); and IV (A/54/45/Add.1, para. 6)

Mr. Reva (Ukraine): The course of development of world society since the Copenhagen Summit has vividly proved that the significance of social development and human well-being for all should be recognized and given the highest priority both now and into the twenty-first century.

The preliminary assessment of the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit indicates one major positive development, namely the evident shift towards recognizing social development as a political priority of the international community. At the same time, we all understand that the achievement of the goals established at Copenhagen will be a lengthy and complicated process.

In the report on the first session of the Preparatory Committee for the Special Session of the General Assembly on the Implementation of the Outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and Further Initiatives, it is rightly noted that improvements in the social area have to be an integral part of any effective strategy of development, both at the national and international levels.

Fully sharing this view, I would like to underline that, among other global activities in the social area, the World Summit became a landmark on the road of the world community towards the advancement of international cooperation in the field of social development.

The Summit reaffirmed the commonly upheld view that social development should be an integral part of domestic policy, and all the national economic programmes lay serious responsibility on Governments before their societies, because all such programmes have social consequences. In this context, my delegation would like to point out the necessity of strict observance by all the Member States of the World Summit decisions, which assigned concrete tasks and defined common approaches towards ensuring further social progress and improving the living conditions of the people of the world. Common positions outlined in Copenhagen reflect a focused view on prospects for development both for individual States and for world society. The Summit decisions, despite being of a non-mandatory character, set out stable ethical

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and moral standards which are to become the goal of the social development of mankind in the twenty-first century.

As we see from the report of the Secretary-General, the process of implementing these goals has been progressing at various degrees of speed and success. While assessing how far the Summit objectives have been implemented, it seems necessary to know how much progress has been made since March 1995. In this regard, we need to share positive experiences, to learn lessons and to carefully study the existing difficulties in this matter. Therefore, we lay our hopes on the success of next year's special session of the General Assembly, called to evaluate the ability of the community of nations to respond properly and adequately to major social challenges and to fulfil our charted commitments.

Bearing in mind a steady tendency towards globalization at the international level, coupled with that of liberalization and economic reform at the national level, it is time to enhance international cooperation based on the principles of non-discrimination, open competitiveness, partnership and mutual benefit. The United Nations should play the key role in establishing effective mechanisms for such cooperation.

In our opinion, United Nations activities in the social and economic area should focus more on the specific requirements of countries with economies in transition in order to facilitate the process of their integration into the world economic space. International cooperation and assistance in this regard will ensure more effective implementation of economic reforms in these countries and help to overcome the unavoidable difficulties inherent in the transition process. As a result of this process, these countries will reach much earlier a high level of economic development which corresponds to their potential. Such a perspective will enable them, in turn, to provide assistance to developing countries. The experience of some Central and Eastern European countries that have achieved remarkable economic and social progress during the last decade proves that this perspective is absolutely real.

The social sphere is considered a decisive factor in our country's economic development. The Government's strategy in this field is embodied in the "Main social policy trends in Ukraine for the years 1997-2000," approved by presidential decree. The main task of this programme is to set up specific mechanisms aimed at the implementation of the principles of a socially oriented economy and at the enhancement of social policy based on the efficient use of existing resources. Among of the priority goals of social policy in my country are to provide for fully productive employment of people, to raise the quality and competitiveness of the labour force and to minimize the negative social consequences of unemployment.

Our State employment policy fully meets relevant international standards and is based on the principle of ensuring equal rights and opportunities for all citizens, irrespective of their origin, socio-economic status, race, nationality, gender, age, political views or religious beliefs. Such a national policy envisages that every citizen of Ukraine can exercise a free choice of activity according to his or her abilities and professional skills, personal interests and social needs.

The social insurance system of our country is also now undergoing a reform process aimed at raising the level of citizens' social protection and motivation to work, as well as the personal responsibility of employers and employees for accumulation of Ukraine's insurance funds. The parliament of Ukraine has adopted the State concept of social security, as well as basic legislation on mandatory State social insurance. The Government of my country makes every effort towards successful implementation of its national programme of action aimed at establishing a stable system of social relations in a market economy, promotion of social integration and social justice.

Ukraine will continue the consistent implementation of the commitments it entered into in Copenhagen and will continue to actively participate in the preparations for the General Assembly special session for the year 2000. We believe that the consolidation of international efforts to solve existing social/development problems will create the necessary conditions for further economic growth and social progress. It will promote further implementation of the goals established at the World Summit to the benefit of all peoples and for the sake of creating a civilized society for each and everyone.

Mr. Gold (Israel): As we reflect on the years since the 1995 World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen, we find ourselves at a momentous crossroads. Globalization and the new information age promise to bridge geographic distances, transcend borders and replace traditional sources of global wealth — based on natural resources — with information technology. In the decades to come, global wealth will be generated not by what is in the ground, but by what is in the minds of men. This may have some unsettling consequences, but it also opens the door to unprecedented opportunities.

The previous coalitions in the international community — driven by petrodollars and the cold war — have crumbled. In their place lies a new reality, in which geography will be less important than communication channels. Alliances can be built on joint ventures, not geopolitical grievances; cooperation can start from shared challenges and not common hostilities. in the new era responsibility will lie with those nations that possess specialized expertise and the willingness to cooperate on social development.

The State of Israel has accepted this mantle for 50 years. In Israel, cooperation in development has become a national *raison d'être*, a fulfilment of the ancient Jewish tradition of *Tikkun Olam*: mending the world. Less than 10 years after Israel's birth, the Israeli Foreign Ministry had already established the Centre for International Cooperation (MASHAV). Quietly, while other problems loomed larger in the foreground, Israel built this Centre into a wide-ranging network of projects, courses and programmes that have trained some 70,000 people from more than 150 countries. These programmes work directly to meet the commitments laid out in the World Summit for Social Development, as enumerated in draft decision A/AC.253/L.7, submitted to the Preparatory Committee by its Vice-Chairman.

Commitment 1 from Copenhagen is to create an enabling environment for social development. One of MASHAV's main branches is its Cooperative Development Programme (CDP), which aims to train professionals in new ways of enhancing their society's economy and policy-making. A prominent example is China: hundreds of Chinese professionals were given special training on the function of Israel's market economy, the role of research and development, the modernization of management systems and the way Israel taps the creativity of its people. They used this expertise to implement new programmes in China itself.

Commitment 2 from Copenhagen is to seek to eradicate poverty. Israel views poverty eradication as a long-term goal, and seeks to develop ways in which nations cannot only overcome poverty, but also maintain the ability to continue to keep it at bay on their own. That means developing potential industry. Examples of this strategy include Peru, where Israel's Cooperative Development Programme helped to revitalize the fruit export trade, and El Salvador, where Israel worked to rehabilitate the dairy industry, which had been all but destroyed.

Commitment 3 from Copenhagen is to promote the goal of full employment. In today's times we cannot ignore the harsh price that some nations are paying for changes in the global economy, particularly as certain sectors, such as the elderly, are forced out of long-held jobs. The impact is especially severe in agricultural societies. In an effort to reverse this trend, Israel has initiated some special programmes, notably in countries such as Georgia and Armenia. MASHAV's CDP has sought to link family farms to collectives and to industries. This has helped preserve employment, while increasing food security and the overall productivity of the industries. In the case of Uzbekistan, Israel's linking of family farms to the dairy industry actually sparked a Government decision to establish 40 additional dairy plants.

Commitment 4 from Copenhagen is to promote social integration. MASHAV recently initiated a number of conflict-resolution courses, in accordance with the recommendations of draft decision A/AC.253/L.7. Recently, a workshop of Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots was held in southern Israel, with encouraging results. In addition, MASHAV has pioneered programmes to integrate young people into the development process, by supporting the development of youth frameworks in various countries. It is worth noting that this area has become a focus of Israeli-Palestinian cooperation, as may Palestinians participate in MASHAV's youth leadership workshops.

Commitment 5 from Copenhagen includes the promotion of equity between men and women. In accordance with the international drive to integrate women into the larger society — from the workforce to the policy-making sphere — Israel has had some major successes. One of the training centres in Israel, the Golda Meir Mount Carmel International Training Centre, brought in 7,050 participants, from countries in Asia, Africa, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, to attend some 300 courses for women engaged specifically in community development. A noteworthy example is Ms. Salimata Kante, a social worker in Senegal, who trained in Israel and then returned to establish a successful string of savings and credit cooperatives.

Commitment 6 from Copenhagen is to promote and attain universal and equitable access to high-quality education and health services. Israel has developed courses for training hundreds of education professionals from countries around the world, who have returned to make tangible progress in their own States. An interesting

example is Chile, now in the midst of a major educational reform programme in the areas of science and technology. Israel worked to train some 200 Chilean teachers and principals in specialized science teaching. Similarly, in Peru the National Committee of University Rectors has adapted Israel's system of community educational centres for training in agricultural technology.

Commitment 7 from Copenhagen is to accelerate the development of Africa and of the least developed countries. As mentioned earlier, Israel invests much of its cooperative efforts in sharing know-how with developing nations, especially in Africa. Yet, beyond agriculture, Israel has also helped to reform the health-care systems of many nations. These efforts have included programmes covering primary health care, legislation for national medical care, insurance, the use of computers in medical services, upgrading hospital and clinic facilities, mobile eye clinics and training courses for nurses. In Ethiopia and in Namibia, for example, Israel's eye clinics have cured literally thousands of blind people.

Commitment 8 from Copenhagen is to include social development goals in structural adjustment programmes. MASHAV has made a top priority of insisting that its joint ventures with partner countries include efforts to decentralize the planning and increase participation by the various players in the development process. Thus, MASHAV seeks to personalize development at the community level. This strategy is highlighted by MASHAV's series of post-graduate courses in integrated regional rural development.

Commitment 9 from Copenhagen is to provide resources for social development. MASHAV tries to use its programmes as a means to generate investment in various developing countries in order to spur economic and tax reform. This was the case, for example, in Ethiopia, where Israel helped create a pilot agricultural project in Kobo, designed to attract investors and aid privatization. A viable taxation system is among the primary goals of MASHAV's economic training seminars.

Commitment 10 from Copenhagen is to ensure international cooperation for social development. This commitment might well be a credo of the Israeli Foreign Ministry's Center for International Cooperation. Nearly all of MASHAV's activities and programmes serve to enhance international cooperation for either social or sustainable development. This includes such programmes as the Cooperative Development Programme; the Development Study Centre, specializing in economic and social training for development; the International Institute, offering leadership seminars; and a host of localized and personalized on-the-spot programmes.

It remains our hope that these projects will not only enhance social development, but embody the central principle of the World Summit for Social Development, namely, that the human being remains the prime focus of our global development aims. We have waited 50 years to break down the walls of hostility and outmoded coalitions based on a reality that no longer exists in this Hall, so that we can together deal with the pressing problems posed by a changing global environment. I call upon Members to join us and to let the spirit of cooperation triumph over poverty, strife and resignation.

Mr. Seif Iddi (United Republic of Tanzania): My delegation wishes to express its appreciation to the Secretary-General for the reports before us. They provide a sound basis for discussions.

The statement made by the Chairman of the Group of 77 and China, with which we associate ourselves, reflects our concerns on the follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development. Permit me therefore to underscore a few points and to share with the Assembly the experiences of my country.

In our statement last May to the Preparatory Committee for the Special Session of the General Assembly on the Implementation of the Outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and Further Initiatives, we pointed out the gap between aspirations and reality and we acknowledged the difficulties involved in bridging that gap. Now, as we stand on the threshold of the new millennium, the most challenging task is to decide on the next course of action.

Since Copenhagen, a number of developments have taken place locally and internationally. In Tanzania, the Government undertook a comprehensive reform programme covering all the social, political and economic sectors with the objective of making them more responsive, efficient and accountable to the people. In this connection, a poverty-eradication strategy was developed to guide and improve the delivery of services to the people.

In recognition of the negative impact that the phenomenon of unemployment has on society, the implementation strategies of the Human Resource Deployment Act that was passed in 1983 were reviewed

and vocational education and training were set up so as to expand vocational training, mostly for youths.

In a bid to address the volatile international financial situation, the Government has instituted a stable, predictable and conducive macroeconomic framework. Institutional reforms have been introduced and measures to improve revenue collection adopted. In this case, the value-added tax introduced in 1998 accounted for improved revenue collection. Tax administration has improved and so has deficit financing, while strict budgetary controls have been put in place. The Investment Promotion Policy of 1990 was reviewed in 1996 and a new Investment Policy adopted that emphasizes maximum mobilization and utilization of domestic capacity, including enhanced cooperation with other developing countries, as well as developed ones. Furthermore, the role of the private sector was redefined to give it a more central role. Political pluralism, which has been in place since 1992, was re-emphasized in order to enhance democracy.

It is evident that in Tanzania, after Copenhagen, it was no longer "business as usual". The Government's commitment to implementing the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action should be looked at in the light of the bold and decisive measures that it had taken towards this end. However, as we stand on the threshold of the new millennium, the reality is painfully brought home to us that, because we operate in the international milieu, unilateral action can be effective only up to a point, after which international cooperation becomes necessary.

The experiences that we have gone through have demonstrated to us that positive national as well as international environments are a prerequisite in supporting efforts aimed at implementing not only the Copenhagen commitments, but also all other commitments made at major international conferences of the 1990s. We need a holistic and complementary approach that will include both the economic and the social dimensions and we need the cooperation of the international community, in particular those who are better endowed than us. In this connection, improved terms of trade, access to international markets, increased direct foreign investments, alleviation of the external debt burden and an expanded resource base are some of the crucial issues that have to be seriously considered.

In his report contained in document A/54/220, the Secretary-General points out that the review process has highlighted the fact that several of the targets specified in the Programme of Action will not be met within the period agreed and that in some instances there have been severe setbacks. Significantly, we note that the fight against poverty has also been eroded by the severe economic difficulties experienced in some countries brought about by the financial crisis and related developments.

These problems have had a ripple effect even in countries far from the scene of crisis. This phenomenon should help elucidate the fact that in this era of globalization the potential to globalize poverty is as great as the potential to globalize prosperity. For humanity the only way to go is to build on the positive while avoiding carrying the baggage of poverty into the next century.

Let us seize the moment at the special session to rededicate ourselves at the highest level to improving our record relative to that of the last five years. Posterity will judge us not by the number of times we fail, but by the efforts we made to overcome our failures.

Miss Durrant (Jamaica): I have the honour to address the General Assembly on agenda item 37, "Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development". At the outset, my delegation wishes to align itself with the statement made earlier by the Permanent Representative of Guyana on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. We also wish to thank the Secretariat for the documents before this Assembly. The Secretary-General's report (A/54/220) imparts useful information on activities being undertaken by the United Nations system, as well as by Member States, in preparation for next year's special session of the General Assembly.

An assessment of the world social situation indicates that, while progress has been made in some areas over the four years since the Copenhagen Summit, significant gaps remain within and between countries. Divergent trends in world economic growth and the persistence of inequalities are evident and are influenced by the process of globalization.

Many developing countries remain severely indebted, and current per capita income levels remain below those of the 1980s in much of Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean and parts of Asia. The alarming statistics on the world's poverty levels are cause for extreme concern. In a number of developing countries, violence, crime and illicit drugs are major symptoms of social disintegration. Economic difficulties,

such as high levels of unemployment and the resulting social isolation, are often reflected in antisocial behaviour.

While improved methods of policing and narcotic trafficking controls are important, these are not sufficient to solve the linked problems of violent crime and illicit drugs. There must also be emphasis on removing the underlying causes. As the United Nations Development Programme *Human Development Report* has reminded us, poverty means more than the lack of material well-being. It also stems from a lack of opportunities and choices basic to human development.

Market economies and democratic political institutions have generally been viewed as promoting universalism through the removal of barriers to equality. However, in many societies there are limitations to the operations of meritocratic principles. Among these are unequal access to material resources, differential access to earning opportunities and status factors, such as gender, race, colour and ethnicity, which reinforce social stratification.

In spite of these gaps and challenges, we cannot lose sight of the vision for the creation of a society for all, characterized by respect for all human rights and fundamental freedoms, equity, social justice and equality, which underlies the essence of the commitments made at Copenhagen.

My delegation wishes to give special recognition to the work done by the Commission for Social Development in the follow-up to the Copenhagen Summit. We will also continue to participate actively in the Preparatory Committee for next year's special session of the General Assembly, and in this regard we look forward to receiving the information and recommendations requested corresponding to the Summit's 10 commitments.

We also welcome the fact that the 1999 substantive session of the Economic and Social Council conducted high-level discussions on the theme "The role of employment and work in poverty eradication: the empowerment and advancement of women". The resulting ministerial communiqué recognized the central role that productive employment plays in poverty eradication and that the mainstreaming of a gender perspective into policies aimed at poverty eradication is all the more crucial since women constitute the majority of people living in poverty.

My delegation intends to remain seized of the issue of poverty eradication and to ensure that it retains a central role in the special session.

Jamaica's social agenda embraces the three core themes of the Social Summit: poverty eradication, expansion of productive employment and social integration.

The Government of Jamaica is committed to the promotion of policies which encourage self-employment, and has designed and implemented programmes in pursuit of that goal. The Micro Industry Development Agency, which promotes micro industrial ventures by providing low-interest loans, and the Human Employment and Resource Training National Agency are but two examples of programmes which the Government of Jamaica has established to achieve the goal of full employment as a vehicle to reduce poverty. In addition, programmes are in place to provide a basic social safety net.

On the basis of our experience in Jamaica, we believe that the following points, which were first made by Jamaica's Minister of Labour, Social Security and Sports at the Preparatory Committee meeting in May, should form part of our thrust if we are to achieve social development for all in a globalizing world.

Jamaica believes that an appropriate macroeconomic policy mix must be maintained. Such policies must be balanced, credible and stability-oriented with the potential to promote economic growth and employment. Job creation must be a central feature of these policies. We believe that businesses should adopt a culture of social responsibility in which they support the communities in which they operate.

There is an urgent need for the international community to assist in cancelling or significantly reducing the debt burden of developing countries. Here, we recognize the steps that have been taken in regard to the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Debt Initiative. It must also be recognized that economic and social policies are mutually reinforcing and that social policy should therefore be considered as a productive factor which can have a positive impact on development.

Efforts to ensure access to credit and appropriate technologies for small-scale enterprises must be critical policy objectives in stimulating economic growth and reducing poverty. In responding to the challenges of the global market, it must be recognized that human resource development is one of the most crucial elements, as the performance of other resources, including capital, land and technology, are directly linked to the performance of labour.

We believe that much greater emphasis must be placed on relevant education and training for a more productive work force. Policy interventions to link training programmes to meet the demands of the economy and to adequately prepare young job-seekers for the labour market are critical. In addition to conventional education and training programmes, new and creative strategies must be introduced to address the needs of the poor and other groups with limited access to the formal education system. Also, rural/urban differences in manifestations of poverty must be clearly understood and addressed accordingly.

In closing, I wish to reaffirm the commitment of the Jamaican Government to the principles and goals embodied in the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action, which reflect our collective desire for a better world for all our people.

Mrs. Al-Nadari (Yemen) (*spoke in Arabic*): The delegation of the Republic of Yemen would like to express its support for the statement made by the representative of Guyana on behalf of the Group of 77 and China on the item 37 under discussion.

We are committed to the obligations and directives of the World Summit for Social Development. Allow us to mention the following steps we have accordingly taken within the framework of the first five-year plan: first, restoring economic growth as the basis for social development, through implementing structural adjustment programmes in order to strike a balance at the macroeconomic level and to promote market economies; secondly, developing social services through increasing the share of public and private sector spending on those services; thirdly, combating poverty and increasing job opportunities; fourthly, consolidating the principles of democracy as the basis for development; and fifthly, promoting female participation in economic activities and giving women a chance to participate directly in decision-making.

The objectives of our five-year plan are in keeping with the Copenhagen Declaration's call for the creation of an economic, social, political, health and educational environment enabling the peoples of the world to achieve comprehensive social development and to address the root causes of poverty. In the light of those objectives we have tried to do the following at the national level.

First, an imbalance between our resources and population growth, as well as structural problems in the national economy, have led to increased poverty. The average wages in the period 1991-1996 were reduced by 17 per cent, unemployment increased and subsidies were lifted, which meant that the poor had to shoulder very heavy burdens. Thus, the living conditions deteriorated. In reality, population growth in Yemen is among the highest in the world, 3.7 per cent annually. Therefore, combating poverty has become a major priority challenge that we have to face.

Secondly, as regards education, we have achieved some degree of progress over the past three decades. However, it is far from being enough. Therefore our Government has taken several steps. Basic education for all by the year 2015 is one goal, and a second is basic education for children from ages 6 to 15 in order to increase the percentage from 65 per cent in 1994 to 90 per cent in the year 2006. We intend to reduce illiteracy rates among women from 76 per cent in 1994 to less than 40 per cent by the year 2006, and to reduce the gap between rural and urban areas.

As far as the health sector is concerned, we are trying to spend more money on health policies and health services, as well as encouraging the participation of the private sector. In order to live up to our commitments in the area of health services, we have adopted the following measures: reducing contagious and parasitic diseases, improving the nutritional situation, protecting women and children from health hazards, improving health care, attempting to reduce death rates and increase the average age to 60 years by the year 2000, and reducing infant mortality from 138 per thousand to 75 per thousand.

In the area of housing, we have adopted policies which take into account the population increase and finding solutions to this problem through the provision of soft loans to individuals and groups.

Since 1995 we have taken the measures in the field of social security aimed at reducing the burden on the poor, providing job opportunities for the unemployed, increasing popular participation and bolstering social interdependence. We have also adopted a number of programmes in order to reduce the effects of contractive economic policies and to create job opportunities for the poor and the unemployed. We have provided training facilities for the handicapped, and we have undertaken a number of projects.

In the field of social integration and social development in Yemen, we have been trying to achieve

this goal on the basis of the importance of human resources. This is very important in terms of development.

Youth and childhood are another concern. Promoting the care of children is one of the major policies adopted in Yemen. We provide protection for children and enable them to benefit from education facilities. Regarding youth, the State has adopted an ambitious policy to ensure their participation in the labour market by providing training facilities and national institutions designed for this purpose.

Regarding women, equality between the sexes is a very important objective for my country. In order to improve the situation of women and achieve equality, the State has promulgated laws and legislation to enable women to participate, making it possible for women to receive education and to work. In 1994, 20.2 per cent of the total labour force was composed of women. Women also participate in the political life of the country.

Yemen is among the least-developed countries and faces serious economic difficulties that have led to structural imbalances. This has meant that the rate of economic growth is low, and therefore success in abiding by the commitments of Copenhagen can be achieved only through cooperation among States, local authorities and non-governmental organizations.

At the international level, we need to establish a framework for cooperation and assistance because of their extreme importance for the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit.

Finally, we hope that the international community will increase its efforts to ensure a successful outcome of the Summit.

The President: In accordance with the decision taken by the Assembly at its 28th plenary meeting, on 6 October, I now call on the Observer of Switzerland.

Mr. Staehelin (Switzerland) *(spoke in French)*: Since this is the first time that I am addressing this year's Assembly, allow me first of all to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your election to the presidency and to extend to you my best wishes for success in carrying out this important function.

Less than nine months from now, the General Assembly will be meeting at the Palais des Nations in Geneva for the special session on the follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development.

Switzerland is proud to host the General Assembly in Geneva. The Swiss federal, cantonal and communal authorities would like to take advantage of this opportunity to express their gratitude to the United Nations Secretariat in New York and in Geneva, the Chairman of the Preparatory Committee and the various specialized agencies for their outstanding cooperation and the enthusiasm they have been demonstrating in preparing this important event.

During its informal meeting at the end of August the Swiss delegation informed the Preparatory Committee and its Bureau of the state of progress of preparations.

What I wish to emphasize today are the objectives of our special session. They are clear and far-ranging.

We need to reach agreement regarding innovative approaches and solutions to forge the economic and social framework of tomorrow's world. The Swiss delegation is encouraged and welcomes the spirit of cooperation displayed by the participants at the last informal session. This atmosphere made it possible to reach agreement in time on such issues as the participation of non-governmental organizations and their accreditation. These issues are important from an organizational point of view for the General Assembly and also for the host country. In addition, substantial progress has been made in drawing up the text to be submitted to the special session. These recent developments augur well for the follow-up to our work.

We are gratified to be receiving significant contributions which the specialized agencies entrusted to do between now and the end of the year.

The impact of the special session will depend both on its content and on the level of participation, which should therefore be as high as possible. The preparations for the follow-up are well advanced, and therefore we hope that Governments will be represented in Geneva at the highest possible level. Governmental participation, however, is not sufficient. The need to find and implement innovative solutions requires synergetic interaction between Governments, international organizations, the private sector and non-governmental organizations.

In close cooperation with the United Nations Secretariat, the Swiss Government will be organizing a forum which will act as a general round table for discussion by bringing together non-governmental

organizations, the private sector, trade unions, academics and those involved in research, as well as governmental representatives.

This forum is designed to strengthen public interest and to create the new impetus which is required for the implementation of the results of the follow-up process. We therefore call upon Governments to participate in the forum, and we also encourage participation at the highest level of non-governmental organizations and of the private sector.

Allow me to conclude by conveying to you, Sir, how pleased the Swiss authorities are that you will be opening and presiding at the end of next June of the special session of the General Assembly in Geneva.

The President: We have heard the last speaker on this item of the agenda.

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft decisions I, II and III, contained in paragraph 71 of document A/54/45 and corrigendum 1, as well as draft decision IV, contained in paragraph 6 of document A/54/45/Add.1.

We turn first to draft decision I, entitled "Arrangements for the special session". May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft decision I?

The draft decision was adopted.

The President: We turn next to draft decision II, entitled "Title of the special session". May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft decision II?

The draft decision was adopted.

The President: We turn now to draft decision III, entitled "Provisional agenda for the second session of the Preparatory Committee for the Special Session of the General Assembly on the Implementation of the Outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and Further Initiatives (3-14 April 2000)". May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft decision III?

The draft decision was adopted.

The President: We turn next to draft decision IV, entitled "Arrangements regarding participation of non-governmental organizations in the special session of the General Assembly on the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and Further Initiatives". May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft decision IV?

The draft decision was adopted.

The President: I should like to inform members that a draft resolution on this item will be submitted to the Secretariat at a later date.

The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 37.

Agenda item 16

Elections to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other elections

(a) Election of twenty members of the Committee for Programme and Coordination

Note by the Secretary-General (A/54/400)

The President: In accordance with General Assembly decision 42/450 of 17 December 1987, the Assembly elects the members of the Committee for Programme and Coordination upon their nomination by the Economic and Social Council.

The Assembly has before it document A/54/400, which contains the nominations by the Economic and Social Council to fill the vacancies in the Committee that will occur as a result of the expiration on 31 December 1999 of the terms of office of Argentina, Austria, Brazil, Cameroon, Congo, Germany, Indonesia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Italy, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Pakistan, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Thailand, Trinidad and Tobago, Ukraine, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and Zimbabwe. Those States are eligible for immediate re-election.

I should like to remind members that, after 1 January 2000, the following States will still be members of the Committee: the Bahamas, Benin, China, Comoros, Egypt, France, Japan, Mexico, the Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation, Uganda, the United States of America, Uruguay and Zambia. Accordingly, those 14 States are not eligible in this election.

I should now like to inform members that the following States have been nominated by the Economic and Social Council. There are four African States for

four vacancies: Cameroon, Gabon, Mauritania and Zimbabwe. There are four Asian States for four vacancies: Bangladesh, Indonesia, the Islamic Republic of Iran and Pakistan. There are three Eastern European States for three vacancies: Poland, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine. There are four Latin American and Caribbean States for four vacancies: Argentina, Brazil, Cuba and Peru. There are five Western European and other States for five vacancies: Germany, Italy, Portugal, San Marino and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

In accordance with rule 92 of the rules of procedure, all elections should be held by secret ballot. However, in accordance with paragraph 16 of decision 34/401, the Assembly may, in elections to subsidiary organs, dispense with secret balloting when the number of candidates corresponds to the number of seats to be filled.

The number of States nominated from among the African States, the Asian States, the Eastern European States, the Latin American and Caribbean States and the Western European and other States is equal to or does not exceed the number of seats to be filled in each of those regions.

May I therefore take it that the Assembly wishes to declare those States nominated by the Economic and Social Council from among the African States, the Asian States, the Eastern European States, the Latin American and Caribbean States and the Western European and other States — namely, Argentina, Bangladesh, Brazil, Cameroon, Cuba, Gabon, Germany, Indonesia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Italy, Mauritania, Pakistan, Peru, Poland, Portugal, the Republic of Moldova, San Marino, Ukraine, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and Zimbabwe — elected members of the Committee for Programme and Coordination for a three-year term beginning on 1 January 2000?

It was so decided.

The President: I congratulate the States that have been elected members of the Committee for Programme and Coordination.

We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of sub-item (a) of agenda item 16.

Agenda item 168

Granting of observer status in the General Assembly for the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization

Draft resolution (A/54/L.8)

The President: I give the floor to the representative of Greece to introduce draft resolution A/54/L.8.

Mr. Rokanas (Greece): It is an honour and a pleasure for me to briefly take the floor in order to introduce draft resolution A/54/L.8 on the granting of observer status in the General Assembly for the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization. Greece has submitted this draft resolution, under item 168 of the agenda, in its capacity as holder of the presidency of the organization, a post that rotates on a six-monthly basis.

The Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) came into existence in 1992 as an intergovernmental mechanism aimed at establishing a network of economic cooperation among its 11 founding member States, namely Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Georgia, Greece, Moldova, Romania, the Russian Federation, Turkey and Ukraine.

BSEC functioned effectively, in its initial form as an intergovernmental forum, until 1 May 1999, when it was transformed into a regional international organization under the name "Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization". According to its Charter, adopted at the summit meeting in Yalta on 4 and 5 June 1998, the BSEC institutional structure consists of, *inter alia*, a Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs, a Chairman-in-Office, a Troika, a Committee of Senior Officials, a permanent international secretariat, and a number of working groups on a variety of topics such as economies, finance, science and technology, communications, tourism and the environment.

In addition, since its inception, BSEC has been gradually extending its scope by developing a grid of international relations. Nine States have already acquired observer status: Austria, France, Germany, Egypt, Israel, Italy, Poland, Slovakia and Tunisia. Many others have applied for such status, and their requests are currently under consideration. Observer status has also been exchanged with the Energy Charter Conference.

Furthermore, BSEC has been productively cooperating with various international organizations such as the European Union and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, as well as within the framework of the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe.

The principles and objectives enshrined in BSEC's Charter are broadly supportive of, and in complete harmony with, those embodied in the United Nations Charter. Since its very first steps, BSEC has energetically pursued friendship, good- neighbourliness, mutual respect, confidence, dialogue and cooperation in a wide variety of fields ranging from development, economies and finance, health care, and science and technology to the fight against terrorism and organized crime, including the illicit trafficking of drugs. BSEC has, in effect, consistently used economic means with a view to promoting also politically significant goals and, in particular, peace, security and stability in the entire Black Sea region.

Two years ago, in Yalta, the heads of State or Government of BSEC decided to seek observer status in the United Nations General Assembly in the conviction that this would substantially benefit both organizations and enable them to promote and enhance their economic and social efforts, contribute to the establishment of a common approach and joint policies, and avoid unnecessary contradictions and duplication.

Furthermore, obtaining observer status would greatly assist BSEC itself not only in consolidating the positive results already achieved so far, but also in continuing, with renewed vigour, its endeavours in pursuance of its noble goals and principles.

Before I conclude, I would like, on behalf of the member States of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization, to extend our heartfelt thanks to the numerous delegations that sponsored this draft resolution. I should like also to mention some others that have joined the list of sponsors: Denmark, Estonia, Fiji, India, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Slovenia and Uruguay. Our heartfelt thanks go also to those delegations.

I would be grateful if all the delegations present here would kindly lend their support to this draft so that it could be adopted by consensus.

Mr. Gorita (Romania) (*spoke in French*): I should like at the outset to express the Romanian Government's satisfaction at the inclusion on the agenda of this session the item regarding the granting of observer status in the General Assembly to the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization (BSECO). The granting of such status would represent additional support for the States members of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization in their efforts for regional integration as well as in the broader global integration process.

The June 1992 Declaration establishing the Organization demonstrates the will of the participating States to develop among themselves broad economic cooperation, to work together to transform the Black Sea region into a zone of peace, stability and prosperity and to promote friendly and good-neighbourly relations.

For Romania, participating in this cooperative structure enables us to accelerate our economic and social development and our process of integration into the European Union. As a founding country, Romania actively supported the idea of transforming the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization into a regional economic organization with its own identity and a unified position in its relations with other international organizations. Hence, prestigious international organizations such as the European Union, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the Council of Europe, the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development and the European Investment Bank have expressed an interest in granting observer status to the BSECO or are already supporting the activities of the organization.

Cooperation with the BSECO is being strengthened by the initiation, in June 1999, of the activities of the Black Sea Trade and Development Bank, whose headquarters are in Thessaloniki, and which will be providing financial support for cooperation projects in the region. Likewise, the memorandum of cooperation between the BSECO and the European Union, adopted on 30 April 1999, attests to the interest that the organization attaches to relations with the European Union. In this context, particular importance is accorded to the European Union's decision to provide assistance, through its regional programmes, to countries members of the organization so as to carry out the projects initiated within the organization as well as to participate on a permanent basis in BSECO meetings.

Starting on 1 November 1999 and for the duration of its chairmanship of the BSECO in 2000 — and in the context of its membership, with Greece and the Republic

of Moldova, in the troika of the organization — Romania intends to identify specific ways of cooperating with other neighbouring cooperative organizations, including the Central European Initiative, the Mediterranean Initiative, the Baltic Council, the Commonwealth of Independent States and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

The step that we are taking today is being given concrete expression in draft resolution A/54/L.8. Initiated by Greece on behalf of the Chairman of the organization and supported by Romania and all the members of the organization, that draft resolution would grant observer status to the BSECO in the General Assembly and represents an important step in affirming the role of the BSECO on the political and economic stage at the international level.

Mr. Abelian (Armenia): The delegation of Armenia is pleased to join the sponsors of draft resolution A/54/L.8, on the granting of observer status in the General Assembly for the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization, which was introduced today by the delegation of Greece.

Throughout its centuries-long history, the Black Sea basin has been a region with many problems and an area where the interests of different countries have intersected. Meanwhile, the tendency towards strengthening cooperation in the region is becoming more and more dominant. The establishment of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization is a remarkable manifestation of this positive tendency. At the current stage, the States members of the BSECO differ both in the level of their economic development and in their approach towards the regulation of the economic process. They also have different views on regional problems, the solution of which will require a determined stance and resolute political will on the part of the leaders of the States of the region. It was the desire to create a real basis for regional economic integration that drove 11 countries of the Black Sea region to found an organization which will lead their societies towards a common understanding of the indivisibility of their political destiny.

The objectives of the BSECO remain clear and understandable: to develop an equal partnership, to strive for a better life for the peoples of the region and to achieve the prosperity of all Black Sea countries in the interest of peace and stability. Regional economic cooperation, which aims to transform the different national economies through dialogue, mutual respect, confidence and conciliation, will significantly contribute to success in the complex process of transition to a market economy and will ultimately lead to the consolidation of a beneficial partnership in all fields of common interest.

Since independence, Armenia has been expressing its firm commitment to developing regional cooperation, and we are a founding member of and an active participant in the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization. Armenia has always considered the BSECO to be a promising model for fostering interaction and harmony among the participating States, and we believe that it will undoubtedly contribute to the creation of a Europe-wide economic space in the future and promote understanding and security in the region.

Armenia believes that efficient and effective cooperation among the Black Sea countries will help consolidate the strategic economic potential inherent in this area, promote free trade, open roads and other means of communication and foster the welfare of peoples, thus stimulating the peaceful settlement of existing political disputes and reinforcing the independence, sovereignty and democratic development of the BSECO member States. We attach great importance to the financial pillar of the BSECO, the Black Sea Trade and Development Bank, which has recently started operations. The Bank is to become the principal mechanism of the BSECO in working out, financing and implementing joint regional projects and providing financial resources for the participating States.

Much has been done in the seven years since the BSECO was founded, although there are still certain difficulties. These may be accounted for by the fact that the majority of countries in the organization are going through a period of reform and transition to a market economy and are searching for an economic model for their development and role in regional processes. Accordingly, they need to search for new, adequate ways and means of strengthening the BSECO process. Putting the main emphasis on discovering additional reserves in the BSECO region itself, the member States must use the significant resources that are at the disposal of other international organizations and regional structures. A number of them, including the Council of Baltic Sea States, the Central European Initiative, the South-East European Cooperative Initiative and the Economic Cooperation Organization, are interested in collaborating with the BSECO in areas of common interest. The tendency of a number of countries to pay greater attention to the activities of the BSECO and to apply

either for observer status or full membership in the organization is also worth noting.

Guided by the principle of BSECO openness towards the global economic environment, member States are further developing activities aimed at promoting fruitful working relations with other international organizations and institutions whose own experience could be beneficial to the needs of the BSECO countries. Contacts between the BSECO and other regional and international organizations include exchanges of information and documentation, working visits and participation in each other's events. It was the principle of openness towards the outside world which motivated the member States when, two years ago in Yalta, they took the important decision to apply for observer status for the BSECO in the General Assembly of the United Nations.

Good traditions of partnership already exist with the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) and with the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO). The ECE has provided support in the organization of joint workshops for BSEC countries on specific subjects regarding multilateral economic cooperation, while UNIDO is engaged in projects in the field of environmental protection.

Armenia believes that observer status in the General Assembly would facilitate the fulfilment of BSEC's mission and significantly increase the organization's weight in the international arena. I would like to conclude by expressing the hope that the General Assembly will give its unanimous support to the draft resolution before us.

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/54/L.8. May I take it that the General Assembly decides to adopt that draft resolution?

Draft resolution A/54/L.8 was adopted (resolution 54/5).

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 168?

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 11.40 a.m.